ἐαυτὸν ταύταις κεκοσμημένον πάλιν κουφισθήσεται δι΄ ἀρετῆς ἐπὶ νοῦν ἰὼν καὶ σοφίαν καὶ διὰ σοφίας ἐπ΄ αὐτό. Καὶ οὗτος θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων θείων καὶ εὐδαιμόνων βίος, ἀπαλλαγὴ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τῇδε, βίος ἀνήδονος τῶν τῇδε, φυγὴ μόνου πρὸς μόνον

# END

# Porphyry: On the Life of Plotinus and the Arrangement of his Work

1. Plotinus, the philosopher our contemporary, seemed ashamed of being in the body.

So deeply rooted was this feeling that he could never be induced to tell of his ancestry, his parentage, or his birthplace.

He showed, too, an unconquerable reluctance to sit to a painter of a sculptor, and when Amelius persisted in urging him to allow of a portrait being made he asked him, 'Is it not enough to carry about this image in which nature has enclosed us? Do you really think I must also consent to leave, as a desired spectacle to posterity, an image of the image?'

In view of this determined refusal Amelius brought his friend Carterius, the best artist of the day, to the Conferences, which were open to every comer, and saw to it that by long observation of the philosopher he caught his most striking personal traits. From the impressions thus stored in mind the artist drew a first sketch; Amelius made various suggestions towards bringing our the resemblance, and in this way, without the knowledge of Plotinus, the genius of Carterius gave us a lifelike portrait.

2. Plotinus was often distressed by an intestinal complaint, but declined clysters, pronouncing the use of such remedies unbecoming in an elderly man: in the same way he refused such medicaments as contain any substance taken from wild beasts or reptiles: all the more, he remarked, since he could not approve of eating the flesh of animals reared for the table.

He abstained from the use of the bath, contenting himself with a daily massage at home: when the terrible epidemic carried off his masseurs he renounced all such treatment: in a short while he contracted malign diphtheria.

During the time I was about him there was no sign of any such malady, but after I sailed for Sicily the condition grew acute: his intimate, Eustochius, who was with him till his death, told me, on my return to Rome, that he became hoarse, so that his voice quite lost its clear and sonorous note, his sight grew dim and ulcers formed on his hands and feet.

As he still insisted on addressing everyone by word of mouth, his condition prompted his friends to withdraw from his society: he therefore left Rome for Campania, retiring to a property which had belonged to Zethos, an old friend of his at this time dead. His wants were provided in part out of Zethos' estate, and for the rest were furnished form Minturnae, where Castricius' property lay.

Of Plotinus' last moments Eustochius has given me an account. He himself was staying at Puteoli and was late in arriving: when he at last came, Plotinus said: 'I have been a long time waiting for you; I am striving to give back the Divine in myself to the Divine in the All.' As he spoke a snake crept under the bed on which he lay and slipped away into a hole in the wall: at the same moment Plotinus died.

This was at the end of the second year of the reign of Claudius (A.D. 270), and, as Eustochius tells me, Plotinus was then sixty-six, I myself was at Lilybaeum at the time, Amelius at Apamea in Syria, Castricius at Rome; only Eustochius was by his side.

Counting sixty-six years back from the second year of Claudius, we can fix Plotinus' birth at the thirteenth year of Severus (A.D. 204-5); but he never disclosed the month or day. This was because he did not desire any birthday sacrifice or feast; yet he himself sacrificed on the traditional birthdays of Plato and of Socrates, afterwards giving a banquet at which every member of the circle who was able was expected to deliver an address.

3. Despite his general reluctance to talk of his own life, some few details he did often relate to us in the course of conversation.

Thus he told how, at the age of eight, when he was already going to school, he still clung about his nurse and loved to bare her breasts and take suck: one day he was told he was a 'perverted imp', and so was shamed out of the trick.

At twenty-seven he was caught by the passion for philosophy: he was directed to the most highly reputed professors to be found at Alexandria; but he used to come from their lectures saddened and discouraged. A friend to whom he opened his heart divined his temperamental craving and suggested Ammonius, whom he had not yet tried. Plotinus went, heard a lecture, and exclaimed to his comrade: 'This was the man I was looking for.'

From that day he followed Ammonius continuously, and under his guidance made such progress in philosophy that he became eager to investigate the Persian methods and the system adopted among the Indians. It happened that the Emperor Gordian was at that time preparing his campaign against Persia; Plotinus joined the army and went on the expedition. He was then thirty-eight, for he had passed eleven entire years under Ammonius. When Gordian was killed in Mesopotamia, it was only with great difficulty that Plotinus came off safe to Antioch.

At forty, in the reign of Philip, he settled in Rome.

Erennius, Origen, and Plotinus had made a compact not to disclose any of the doctrines which Ammonius had revealed to them. Plotinus kept faith, and in all his intercourse with his associates divulged nothing of Ammonius' system. But the compact was broken, first by Erennius and then by Origen following suit: Origen, it is true, put in writing nothing but the treatise *On the Spirit-Beings*, and in Gallienus' reign that entitled *The King the Sole Creator*. Plotinus himself remained a long time without writing, but he began to base his Conferences on what he had gathered from his studies under Ammonius. In this way, writing nothing but constantly conferring with a certain group of associates, he passed ten years.

He used to encourage his hearers to put questions, a liberty which, as Amelius told me, led to a great deal of wandering and futile talk.

Amelius had entered the circle in the third year of Philip's reign, the third, too, of Plotinus' residence in Rome, and remained about him until the first year of Claudius, twenty-four years in all. He had come to Plotinus after an efficient training under Lysimachus: in laborious diligence he surpassed all his contemporaries; for example, he transcribed and arranged nearly all the works of Numenius, and was not far from having most of them off by heart. He also took notes of the Conferences and wrote them out in something like a hundred treatises which he has since presented to Hostilianus Hesychius of Apamea, his adopted son.

4. I myself arrived from Greece in the tenth year of Gallienus' reign, accompanied by Antonius of Rhodes, and found Amelius an eighteen-years' associate of Plotinus, but still lacking the courage to write anything except for the notebooks, which had not reached their century. Plotinus, in this tenth year of Gallienus, was about fifty-nine: when I first met him I was thirty.

From the first year of Gallienus Plotinus had begun to write upon such subjects as had arisen at the Conferences: when I first came to know him in this tenth year of the reign he had composed twenty-one treatises.

They were, as I was able to establish, by no means given about freely. In fact the distribution was still grudging and secret; those that obtained them had passed the strictest scrutiny.

Plotinus had given no titles to these treatises; everybody headed them for himself: I cite them here under the titles which finally prevailed, quoting the first words of each to facilitate identification. [1]

1. On Beauty (I.6)
2. On the Immortality of the Soul (IV.7)
3. On Fate (III.1)
4. On the Essence of the Soul (IV.2)
5. On the Intellectual-Principle, on the Ideas, and on the Authentic-Existent (V.9)
6. On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies (IV.8)
7. How the Post-Primal derives from the Primal; and on The One(V.4)
8. Whether all the Souls are One (IV.9)
9. On the Good or the One (VI.9)
10. ON the Three Primal Hypostases (V.1)
11. On the Origin and Order of the Post-Primals (V.2)

12. On the Two Orders of Matter (II.4)
13. Various Questions (III.4)
14. On the Circular Movement (II.2)
15. On our Tutelary Spirit (III.4)
16. On the Reasoned Dismissal (I.9)
17. On Quality (II.6)
18. Whether there are Ideas even of Particulars (V.7)
19. On the Virtues (I.2)
20. On Dialectic (I.3)
21. Why the Soul is described as Intermediate between the Existent having parts and the undisparted Existent (IV.1)

These are the twenty-one treatises which, as I have said, Plotinus had already written, by his fifty-ninth year, when I first came to him.

5. I had been, it is true, in Rome a little before this tenth year of Gallienus, but at that time Plotinus was taking a summer holiday, engaging merely in conversation with his friends. After coming to know him I passed six years in close relation with him. Many question were threshed out in the Conferences of those six years and, under persuasion from Amelius and myself, he composed two treatises to establish:

22, 23. That the Authentic-Existent is universally an integral, self-indentical Unity (VI.4,5)

In immediate succession to these he composed two more: one is entitled:

24. That there is no Intellectual Act in the Principle which transcends the Authentic-Existent; and on the Nature that has the Intellectual Act Primally and that which has it Secondarily (V.6)

The other:

25. On Potentiality and Actuality (II.5)

After these come the following twenty:

26. On the Impassibility of the Bodiless (III.6)
27. On the Soul, First (IV.3)
28. On the Soul, Second (IV.4)
29. On the Soul, Third; or, How We See (IV.5)
30. On Contemplation (III.8)
31. On Intellectual Beauty (V.8)
32. That the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellectual-Principle; and on the Good (V.5)
33. Against the Gnostics (II.9)
34. On Numbers (VI.6)
35. Why Distant Objects appear Small (II.8)
36. Whether Happiness depends upon Extension of Time (I.5)
37. On Coalescence (II.7)
38. How the Multitude of Ideas Exists; and on the Good (VI.7)
39. On Free-Will (VI.8)
40. On the World (II.1)
41. On Sensation and Memory (IV.6)
42. On the Kinds of Being, First (VI.6)
43. On the Kinds of Being, Second (VI.2)
44. On the Kinds of Being, Third (VI.3)
45. On Eternity and Time (III.7)

Thus we have twenty-four treatises composed during the six years of my association with him and dealing, as the titles indicate, with such problems as happened to arise at the Conferences; add the twenty-one composed before my arrival, and we have accounted for forty-five treatises.

6. The following five more Plotinus wrote and sent to me while I was living in Sicily, where I had gone about the fifteenth year of Gallienus:

46. On Happiness (I.4)
47. On Providence, First (III.2)
48. On Providence, Second (III.3)
49. On the Conscious Hypostases and the All-Transcending (V.3)
50. On Love (III.5)

These five he sent me in the first year of Claudius: in the early months of the second year, shortly before his death, I received the following four:

51. On Evil (I.8)
52. Whether the Stars have Causal Operation (II.3)
53. On the Animate (I.1)
54. On Happiness (I.7)

Adding these nine to the forty-five of the first and second sets we have a total of fifty-four treatises.

According to the time of writing--early manhood, vigorous prime, worn-out constitution--so the tractates vary in power. The first twenty-one pieces manifest a slighter capacity, the talent being not yet matured to the fulness of nervous strength. The twenty-four produced in the mid-period display the utmost reach of the powers, and except for the short treatises among them, attain the highest perfection. The last nine were written when the mental strength was already waning, and of these the last four show less vigour even than the five preceding.

7. Plotinus had a large following. Notable among the more zealous students, really devoted to philosophy, was Amelius of Tuscany, whose family name was Gentilianus. Amelius preferred to call himself Amerius, changing L for R, because, as he explained, it suited him better to be named from Amereia, Unification, then from Ameleia, Indifference.

The group included also one Paulinus, a doctor of Scythopolis, whom Amelius used to call Mikkalos in allusion to his blundering habit of mind.

Among closer personal friends was Eustochius of Alexandria, also a doctor, who came to know Plotinus towards the end of his life, and attended him until his death: Eutochius consecrated himself exclusively to Plotinus' system and became a veritable philosopher.

Then there was Zoticus, at once critic and poet, who has amended the text of Antimachus' works and is the author of an exquisite poem upon the Atlantis story: is sight failed, and he died a little before Plotinus, as also did Paulinus.

Another friend was Zethos, an Arabian by descent, who married a daughter of Ammonius' friend Theodosius. Zethos, too, was a doctor. Plotinus was deeply attached to him and was always trying to divert him from the political career in which he stood high. Plotinus was on the most familiar terms with him, and used to stay with him at his country place, six miles from Minturnae, a property which had formerly belonged to Castricius Firmus.

Castricius was excelled by none of the group in appreciation of the finer side of life: he venerated Plotinus; he devoted himself in the most faithful comradeship to Amelius in every need, and was in all matters as loyal to myself as though I were his own brother.

This was another example of a politician venerating the philosopher. There were also among Plotinus' hearers not a few members of the Senate, amongst whom Marcellus Orontius and Sabinillus showed the greatest assiduity in philosophical studies.

Another Senator, Rogatianus, advanced to such detachment from political ambitions that he gave up all his property, dismissed all his slaves, renounced every dignity, and, on the point of taking up his praetorship, the lictors already at the door, refused to come out or to have anything to do with the office. He even abandoned his own house, spending his time here and there at this friends' and acquaintances', sleeping and eating with them and taking, at that, only one meal every other day. He had been a victim of gout, carried in a chair, but this new regime of abstinence and abnegation restored his health: he had been unable to stretch out his hands; he came to use them as freely as men living by manual labour. Plotinus took a great liking to Rogatianus and frequently praised him very highly, holding him up as a model to those aiming at the philosophical life.

Then there was Serapion, an Alexandrian, who began life as a professional orator and later took to the study of philosophy, but was never able to conquer the vices of avarice and usury.

I myself, Porphyry of Tyre, was one of Plotinus' very closest friends, and it was to me he entrusted the task of revising his writings.

8. Such revision was necessary: Plotinus could not bear to go back on his work even for one re-reading; and indeed the condition of his sight would scarcely allow it: his handwriting was slovenly; he misjoined his words; he cared nothing about spelling; his one concern was for the idea: in these habits, to our general surprise, he remained unchanged to the very end.

He used to work out his design mentally from first to last: when he came to set down his ideas, he wrote out at one jet all he had stored in mind as though he were copying from a book.

Interrupted, perhaps, by someone entering on business, he never lost hold of his plan; he was able to meet all the demands of the conversation and still keep his own train of thought clearly before him; when he was fee again, he never looked over what he had previously written--his sight, it has been mentioned, did not allow of such re-reading--but he linked on what was to follow as if no distraction had occurred.

Thus he was able to live at once within himself and for others; he never relaxed from his interior attention unless in sleep; and even his sleep was kept light be an abstemiousness that often prevented him taking as much as a piece of bread, and by this unbroken concentration upon his own highest nature.

9. Several women were greatly attached to him, amongst them Gemina, in whose house he lived, and her daughter, called Gemina, too, after the mother, and Amphiclea, the wife Ariston, son Iamblichus; all three devoted themselves assiduously to philosophy.

Not a few men and women of position, on the approach of death, had left their boys and girls, with all their property, in his care, feeling that with Plotinus for guardian the children would be in holy hands. His house therefore was filled with lads lasses, amongst them Potamon, in whose education he took such interest as often to hear the boy recite verses of his own composition.

He always found time for those that came to submit returns of the children's property, and he looked closely to the accuracy of the accounts: 'Until the young people take to philosophy,' he used to say, 'their fortunes and revenues must be kept intact for them.' And yet all this labour and thought over the worldly interests of so many people never interrupted, during waking hours, his intention towards the Supreme.

He was gentle, and always at the call of those having the slightest acquaintance with him. After spending twenty-six years in Rome, acting, too, as arbiter in many differences, he had never made an enemy of any citizen.

10. Among those making profession of Philosophy at Rome was one Olympius, an Alexandrian, who had been for a little while a pupil of Ammonius.

This man's jealous envy showed itself in continual insolence, and finally he grew so bitter that he even ventured sorcery, seeking to crush Plotinus by star-spells. But he found his experiments recoiling upon himself, and he confessed to his associates that Plotinus possessed 'a mighty soul, so powerful, as to be able to hurl every assault back upon those that sought his ruin'. Plotinus had felt the operation and declared that at that moment Olympius' 'limbs were convulsed and his body shrivelling like a money-bag pulled tight'. Olympius, perceiving on several attempts that he was endangering himself rather than Plotinus, desisted.

In fact Plotinus possessed by birth something more than is accorded to other men. An Egyptian priest who had arrived in Rome and, through some friend, had been presented to the philosopher, became desirous of displaying his powers to him, and he offered to evoke a visible manifestation of Plotinus' presiding spirit. Plotinus readily consented and the evocation was made in the Temple of Isis, the only place, they say, which the Egyptian could find pure in Rome.

At the summons a Divinity appeared, not a being of the spirit-ranks, and the Egyptian exclaimed: 'You are singularly graced; the guiding-spirit within you is not of the lower degree but a God.' It was not possible, however, to interrogate or even to contemplate this God any further, for the priest's assistant, who had been holding the birds to prevent them flying away, strangled them, whether through jealousy or in terror. Thus Plotinus had for indwelling spirit a Being of the more divine degree, and he kept his own divine spirit unceasingly intent upon that inner presence. It was this preoccupation that led him to write his treatise upon *Our Tutelary Spirit*, an essay in the explanation of the differences among spirit-guides.

Amelius was scrupulous in observing the day of the New-Moon and other holy-days, and once asked Plotinus to join in some such celebration: Plotinus refused: 'It is for those Beings to come to me, not for me to go to them.'

What was in his mind in so lofty an utterance we could not explain to ourselves and we dared not ask him.

11. He had a remarkable penetration into character.

Once a valuable necklace was stolen from Chione, who was living in honourable widowhood with her children in the same house as Plotinus: the servants were called before him: he scrutinized them all, then indicated one: 'This man is the thief.' The man was whipped but for some time persisted in denial: finally, however, he confessed, and restored the necklace.

Plotinus foretold also the future of each of the children in the household: for instance, when questioned as to Polemon's character and destiny he said: 'He will be amorous and short-lived': and so it proved.

I myself at one period had formed the intention of ending my life; Plotinus discerned my purpose; he came unexpectedly to my house where I had secluded myself, told me that my decision sprang not from reason but from mere melancholy and advised me to leave Rome. I obeyed and left for Sicily, which I chose because I heard that one Probus, a man of scholarly repute, was living there not far from Lilybaeum. Thus I was induced to abandon my first intention but was prevented from being with Plotinus between that time and his death.

12. The Emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina greatly honoured and venerated Plotinus, who thought to turn their friendly feeling to some good purpose. In Campania there had once stood, according to tradition, a City of Philosophers, a ruin now; Plotinus asked the Emperor to rebuild this city and to make over the surrounding district to the new-founded state; the population was to live under Plato's laws: the city was to be called Platonopolis; and Plotinus undertook to settle down there with his associates. He would have had his way without more ado but that opposition at court, prompted by jealousy, spite, or some such paltry motive, put an end to the plan.

13. At the Conferences he showed the most remarkable power of going to the heart of a subject, whether in exposition or in explanation, and his phrasing was apt; but he made mistakes in certain words; for example, he said 'anamnemisketai' for 'anamimnesketai'--just such errors as he committed in his writing.

When he was speaking his intellect visibly illuminated his face: always of winning presence, he became at these times still more engaging: a slight moisture gathered on his forehead; he radiated benignity.

He was always as ready to entertain objections as he was powerful in meeting them. At one time I myself kept interrogating him during three days as to how the soul is associated with the body, and he continued explaining; a man called Thaumasius entered in the midst of our discussions; the visitor was more interested in the general drift of the system than in particular points, and said he wished to hear Plotinus expounding some theory as he would in a set treatise, but that he could not endure Porphyry's questions and answers: Plotinus asked, 'But if we cannot first solve the difficulties Porphyry raises what could go into the treatise?'

14. In style Plotinus is concise, dense with thought, terse, more lavish of ideas than of words, most often expressing himself with a fervid inspiration. He followed his own path rather than that of tradition, but in his writings both the Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines are sunk; Aristotle's Metaphysics, especially, is condensed in them, all but entire.

He had a thorough theoretical knowledge of Geometry, Mechanics, Optics, and Music, though it was not in his temperament to go practically into these subjects.

At the Conferences he used to have treatises by various authors read aloud--among the Platonists it might be Severus of Cronius, Numenius, Gaius, or Atticus; and among the Peripatetics Aspasius, Alexander, Adrastus, or some such writer, at the call of the moment. But it was far from his way to follow any of these authors blindly; he took a personal, original view, applying Ammonius' method to the investigation of every problem.

He was quick to absorb; a few words sufficed him to make clear the significance of some profound theory and so to pass on. After hearing Longinus' work *On Causes* and his *Antiquary*, he remarked: 'Longinus is a man of letters, but in no sense a philosopher.'

One day Origen came to the conference-room; Plotinus blushed deeply and was on the point of bringing his lecture to an end; when Origen begged him to continue, he said: 'The zest dies down when the speaker feels that his hearers have nothing to learn from him.'

15. Once on Plato's feast I read a poem, 'The Sacred Marriage'; my piece abounded in mystic doctrine conveyed in veiled words and was couched in terms of enthusiasm; someone exclaimed: 'Porphyry has gone mad'; Plotinus said to me so that all might hear: 'You have shown yourself at once poet, philosopher and hierophant.'

The orator Diophanes one day read a justification of the Alcibiades of Plato's Banquet and maintained that the pupil, for the sake of advancement in virtue, should submit to the teacher without reserve, even to the extent of carnal commerce: Plotinus started up several times to leave the room but forced himself to remain; on the breaking up of the company he directed me to write a refutation. Diophanes refused to lend me his address and I had to depend on my recollection of his argument; but my refutation, delivered before the same audience, delighted Plotinus so much that during the very reading he repeatedly quoted: 'So strike and be a light to men.'

When Eubulus, the Platonic Successor, wrote from Athens, sending treatises on some questions in Platonism. Plotinus had the writings put into my hands with instructions to examine them and report to him upon them.

He paid some attention to the principles of Astronomy though he did not study the subject very deeply on the mathematical side. He went more searchingly into Horoscopy; when once he was convinced that its results were not to be trusted he had no hesitation in attacking the system frequently both at the Conferences and in his writings.

16. Many Christians of this period--amongst them sectaries who had abandoned the old philosophy, men of the schools of Adelphius and Aquilinus--had possessed themselves of works by Alexander of Libya, by Philocomus, by Demostratus, and bby Lydus, and exhibited also Revelations bearing the names of Zoroaster, Zostrianus, Nicotheus, Allogenes, Mesus, and others of that order. Thus they fooled many, themselves fooled first; Plato, according to them, had failed to penetrate into the depth of Intellectual Being.

Plotinus fequently attacked their position at the Conferences and finally wrote the treatise which I have headed *Against the Gnostics*: he left to us of the circle the task of examining what he himself passed over. Amelius proceeded as far as a fortieth treatise in refutation of the book of Zostrianus: I myself have shown on many counts that the Zoroastrian volume is spurious and modern, concocted by the sectaries in order to pretend that the doctrines they had embraced were those of the ancient sage.

17. Some of the Greeks began to accuse Plotinus of appropriating the ideas of Numenius.

Amelius, being informed of this charge by the Stoic and Platonist Trypho, challenged it in a treatise which he entitled *The Difference between the Doctrines of Plotinus and Numenius*. He dedicated the work to me, under the name of Basileus (or King). This really is my name; it is equivalent to Porphyry (Purple-robed) and translates the name I bear in my own tongue; for I am called Malchos, like my father, and 'Malchos' would give 'Basileus' in Greek. Longinus, in dedicating his work *On Impulse* to Cleodamus and myself, addressed us as 'Cleodamus and Malchus', just as Numenius translated the Latin 'Maximus' into its Greek equivalent 'Megalos'.

Here followed Amelius' letter:

'Amelius to Basileus, with all good wishes.

'You have been, in your own phrase, pestered by the persistent assertion that our friend's doctrine is to be traced to Numenius of Apamea.

'Now, if it were merely for those illustrious personages who spread this charge, you may be very sure I would never utter a word in reply. It is sufficiently clear that they are actuated solely by the famous and astonishing facility of speech of theirs when they assert, at one moment, that he is an idle babbler, next that he is a plagiarist, and finally that his plagiarisms are feeble in the extreme. Clearly in all this we have nothing but scoffing and abuse.

'But your judgement has persuaded me that we should profit by this occasion firstly to provide ourselves with a useful memorandum of the doctrines that have won our adhesion, and secondly to bring about a more complete knowledge of the system--long celebrated thought it be--to the glory of our friend, a man so great as Plotinus.

'Hence I now bring you the promised Reply, executed, as you and your self know, in three days. You must judge it with reasonable indulgence; this is no orderly and elaborate defence composed in step-by-step correspondence with the written indictment: I have simply set down, as they occurred to me, my recollections of our frequent discussions. You will admit, also, that it is by no means easy to grasp the meaning of a writer who (like Numenius), now credited with the opinion we also hold, varies in the terms he uses to express the one idea.

'If I have falsified any essential of the doctrine, I trust to your good nature to set me right: I am reminded of the phrase in the tragedy: A busy man and far from the teachings of our master I must needs correct and recant. Judge how much I wish to give you pleasure. Good health.'

18. This letter seemed worth insertion as showing, not merely that some contemporary judgement pronounced Plotinus to be parading on the strength of Numenius' ideas, but that he was even despised as a word-spinner.

The fact is that these people did not understand his teaching: he was entirely free from all the inflated pomp of the professor: his lectures had the air of conversation, and he never forced upon his hearers the severely logical substructure of his thesis.

I myself, when I first heard him, had the same experience. It led me to combat his doctrine in a paper in which I tried to show that the Intelligibles exist outside of the Intellectual-Principle. He had my work read to him by Amelius: at the end he smiled and said: 'You must clear up these difficulties, Amelius: Porphyry doesn't understand our position.' Amelius wrote a tract of considerable length *In answer to Porphyry's Objections*; I wrote a reply to the reply: Amelius replied to my reply; at my third attempt I came, though even so with difficulty, to grasp the doctrine: then only, I was converted, wrote a recantation, and read it before the circle. From that time on I was entrusted with Plotinus' writings and sought to stir in the master himself the ambition of organizing his doctrine and setting it down in more extended form. Amelius, too, under my prompting, was encouraged in composition.

19. Longinus' estimate of Plotinus, formed largely upon indications I myself had given him in my letters, will be gathered from the following extract from one of his to me. He is asking me to leave Sicily and join him in Phoenicia, and to bring Plotinus' works with me. He says:

'And send them at your convenience or, better, bring them; for I can never cease urging you to give the road towards us the preference over any other. If there is no better reason--and what intellectual gain can you anticipate form a visit to us?--at least there are old acquaintances and the mild climate which would do you good in the weak state of health you report. Whatever else you may be expecting, do not hope for anything new of my own, or even for the earlier works which you tell me you have lost; for there is a sad dearth of copyists here. I assure you it has taken me all this time to complete my set of Plotinus, and it was done only by calling off my scribe from all his routine work, and keeping him steadily to this one task.

'I think that now, with what you have sent me, I have everything, though in a very imperfect state, for the manuscript is exceeding faulty. I had expected our friend Amelius to correct the scribal errors, but he evidently had something better to do. The copies are quite useless to me; I have been especially eager to examine the treatises *On the Soul* and *On the Authentic-Existent*, and these are precisely the most corrupted. It would be a great satisfaction to me if you would send me faithful transcripts for collation and return--though again I suggest to you not to send but to come in person, bringing me the correct copies of these treatises and of any that Amelius may have passed over. All that he brought with him I have been careful to make my own: how could I be content not to possess myself of all the writings of a man so worthy of the deepest veneration?

'I repeat, what I have often said in your presence and in your absence, as on that occasion when you were at Tyre, that while much of the theory does not convince me, yet I am filled with admiration and delight over the general character of the work, the massive thinking of the man, the philosophic handling of problems; in my judgement investigators must class Plotinus' work with that holding the very highest rank.'

20. This extended quotation from the most acute of the critics of our day--a writer who has passed judgement on nearly all his contemporaries--serves to show the estimate he came to set upon Plotinus of whom, at first, misled by ignorant talk, he had held a poor opinion.

His notion, by the way, that the transcripts he acquired from Amelius were faulty sprang from his misunderstanding of Plotinus' style and phraseology; if there were ever any accurate copies, these were they, faithful reproductions from the author's own manuscript.

Another passage from the work of Longinus, dealing with Amelius, Plotinus, and other metaphysicians of the day, must be inserted here to give a complete view of the opinion formed upon these philosophers by the most authoritative and most searching of critics. The work was entitled *On the End: in Answer to Plotinus and Gentilianus Amelius*. It opens with the following preface:

'In our time, Marcellus, there have been many philosophers--especially in our youth--for there is a strange scarcity at present. When I was a boy, my parents' long journeys gave me the opportunity of seeing all the better-known teachers; and in later life those that still lived became known to me as my visits to this and that city and people brought me where they happened to live.

'Some of these undertook the labour of developing their theories in formal works and so have bequeathed to the future the means of profiting by their services. Others thought they had done enough when they had convinced their own immediate hearers of the truth of their theories..

'First of those that have written.

'Among the Platonists there are Euclides, Democritus, Proclinus the philosopher of the Troad, and the two who still profess philosophy at Rome, Plotinus and his friend Gentilianus Amelius. Among the Stoics there are Themistocles and Phoibion and the two who flourished only a little while ago, Annius and Medius. And there is the Peripatetic, Heliodorus of Alexandria.

'For those that have not written, there are among the Platonists Ammonius and Origen, two teachers whose lectures I myself attended during a long period, men greatly surpassing their contemporaries in mental power; and there are the Platonic Successors at Athens, Theodotus and Eubulus.

'No doubt some writing of a metaphysical order stands to the credit of this group: Origen wrote *On Spirit-Beings, Eubulus On the Philebus and Gorgias, and the objections urged by Aristotle to Plato's Republic*; but this is not enough to class either of them with systematic authors. This was side-play; authorship was not in the main plan of their careers.

'Among Stoic teachers that refrained from writing we have Herminus and Lysimachus, and the two living at Athens, Musonius and Athenaeus; among Peripatetics, Ammonius and Ptolemaeus.

'The two last were the most accomplished scholars of their time, Ammonius especially being unapproached in breadth of learning; but neither produced any systematic work; we have from them merely verses and duty-speeches; and these I cannot think to have been preserved with their consent; they did not concern themselves about formal statement of their doctrine, and it is not likely they would wish to be known in after times by compositions of so trivial a nature.

'To return to the writers; some of them, like Euclides, Democritus, and Proclinus, confined themselves to the mere compilation and transcription of passages from earlier authorities. Others diligently worked over various minor points in the investigations of the ancients, and put together books dealing with the same subjects. Such were Annius, Medius, and Phoibion, the last especially choosing to be distinguished for style rather than for systematic thinking. In the same class must be ranked Heliodorus; his writings contribute nothing to the organization of the thought which he found to his hand in the teaching of earlier workers.

'Plotinus and Gentilianus Amelius alone display the true spirit of authorship; they treat of a great number of questions and they bring a method of their own to the treatment.

'Plotinus, it would seem, set the principles of Pythagoras and of Plato in a clearer light than anyone before him; on the same subjects, Numenius, Cronius, Moderatus, and Thrasyllus fall far short of him in precision and fullness. Amelius set himself to walk in Plotinus' steps and adopted most of Plotinus' opinions; his method, however, was diffuse an, unlike his friend, he indulges in an extravagance of explanation. 'Only these two seem to me worth study. What profit can anyone expect from troubling the works of any of the others to the neglect of the originals on which they drew? They bring us nothing of their own, not even a novel augment, much less a leading idea, and are too unconcerned even to set side by side the most generally adopted theories or to choose the better among them.

'My own method has been different; as for example when I replied to Gentilianus upon Plato's treatment of Justice and in a review I undertook of Plotinus' work *On the Ideas*. This latter was in the form of a reply to Basileus of Tyre, my friend as theirs. He had preferred Plotinus' system to mine and had written several works in the manner of his master, amongst them a treatise supporting Plotinus' theory of the Idea against that which I taught. I endeavoured, not, I think, unsuccessfully, to show that his change of mind was mistaken.

'In these two essays I have ranged widely over the doctrines of this school, as also in my *Letter to Amelius* which, despite the simple title with which I contented myself, has the dimensions of a book, being a reply to a treatise he addressed to me from Rome under the title *On Plotinus' Philosophic Method*.'

21. This Preface leaves no doubt of Longinus' final verdict: he ranks Plotinus and Amelius above all authors of his time in the multitude of questions they discuss; he credits them with an original method of investigation: in his judgement they by no means took their system from Numenius or gave a first place to his opinions, but followed the Pythagorean and Platonic schools; finally he declares the writings of Numenius, Cronius, Moderatus, and Thrasyllus greatly inferior in precision and fullness to those of Plotinus.

Notice, by the way, that while AMelius id described as following in Plotinus' footsteps, it is indicated that his temperamental prolixity led him to delight in an extravagance of explanation foreign to his master: in the reference to myself, though I was then only at the beginning of my association with Plotinus--'Basileus of Tyre, my friend as theirs, who has written a good deal, has taken Plotinus as his model'--Longinus recognizes that I entirely avoided Amelius' unphilosophical prolixity and made Plotinus' manner my standard.

Such a pronouncement upon the value of Plotinus' work, coming from so great an authority, the first of critics then as now, must certainly carry weight, and I may remark that if I had been able to confer with him, during such a visit as he proposed, he would not have written to combat doctrines which he had not thoroughly penetrated.

22. But why talk, to use Hesiod's phrase, 'About Oak and Rock'? If we are to accept the evidence of the wise--who could be wiser than a God? And here the witness is the same God that said with truth:

> 'I have numbered the sands and taken the measure of the sea; I understand the dumb and hear where there has been no speech.'

Apollo was consulted by Amelius, who desired to learn where Plotinus' soul had gone. And Apollo, who uttered of Socrates that great praise, 'Of all men, Socrates the wisest'--you shall hear what a full and lofty oracle Apollo rendered upon Plotinus.

I raise an undying song, to the memory of a gently friend, a hymn of praise woven to the honey-sweet tones of my lyre under the touch of the golden plectrum.

The Muses, too, I call to lift the voice with me in strains of many-toned exultation, in passion ranging over all the modes of song: even as of old they raised the famous chant to the glory of Aeacides in the immortal ardours of the Homeric line.

Come, then, Sacred Chorus, let us intone with one great sound the utmost of all song, I Phoebus, Bathychaites, singing in the midst.

Celestial! Man at first but now nearing the diviner ranks! the bonds of human necessity are loosed for you and, strong of heart, you beat your eager way from out the roaring tumult of the fleshly life to the shores of that wave-washed coast free from the thronging of the guilty, thence to take the grateful path of the sinless soul: where glows the splendour of God, where Right is throned in the stainless place, far from the wrong that mocks at law.

Oft-times as you strove to rise above the bitter waves of this blood-drenched life, above the sickening whirl, toiling in the mid-most of the rushing flood and the unimaginable turmoil, oft-times, from the Ever-Blessed, there was shown to you the Term still close at hand:

Oft-times, when your mind thrust out awry and was like to be rapt down unsanctioned paths, the Immortals themselves prevented, guiding you on the straightgoing way to the celestial spheres, pouring down before you a dense shaft of light that your eyes might see from amid the mournful gloom.

Sleep never closed those eyes: high above the heavy murk of the mist you held them; tossed in the welter, you still had vision; still you saw sights many and fair not granted to all that labour in wisdom's quest.

But not that you have cast the screen aside, quitted the tomb that held your lofty soul, you enter at once the heavenly consort: where fragrant breezes play, where all is unison and winning tenderness and guileless joy, and the place is lavish of the nectar-streams the unfailing Gods bestow, with the blandishments of the Loves, and delicious airs, and tranquil sky:

where Minos and Rhadamanthus dwell, great brethren of the golden race of mighty Zeus; where dwell the just Aeacus, and Plato, consecrated power, and stately Pythagoras and all else that form the Choir of Immortal Love, that share their parentage with the most blessed spirits, there where the heart is ever lifted in joyous festival.

O Blessed One, you have fought your many fights; now, crowned with unfading life, your days are with the Ever-Holy.

Rejoicing Muses, let us stay our song and the subtle windings of our dance; thus much I could but tell, to my golden lyre, of Plotinus, the hallowed soul.

23. Good and kindly, singularly gentle and engaging: thus the oracle presents him, and so in fact we found him. Sleeplessly alert--Apollo tells--pure of soul, ever striving towards the divine which he loved with all his being, he laboured strenuously to free himself

and rise above the bitter waves of this blood-drenched life: and this is why to Plotinus--God-like and lifting himself often, by the ways of meditation and by the methods Plato teaches in the Banquet, to the first and all-transcendent God--that God appeared, the God who has neither shape nor form but sits enthroned above the Intellectual-Principle and all the Intellectual-Sphere.

'There was shown to Plotinus the Term ever near': for the Term, the one end, of his life was to become Uniate, to approach to the God over all: and four times, during the period I passed with him, he achieved this Term, by no mere latent fitness but by the ineffable Act.

To this God, I also declare, I Porphyry, that in my sixty-eighth year I too was once admitted and I entered into Union.

We are told that often when he was leaving the way, the Gods set him on the true path again, pouring down before him a dense shaft of light; here we are to understand that in his writing he was overlooked and guided by the divine powers.

'In this sleepless vision within and without,' the oracle says, 'your eyes have beheld sights many and fair not vouchsafed to all that take the philosophic path': contemplation in man may sometimes be more than human, but compare it with the True-Knowing of the Gods and, wonderful though it be, it can never plunge into the depths their divine vision fathoms.

Thus far the Oracle recounts what Plotinus accomplished and to what heights he attained while still in the body: emancipated from the body, we are told how he entered the celestial circle where all is friendship, tender delight, happiness, and loving union with God, where Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, the sons of God, are enthroned as judges of souls--not, however, to hold him to judgement but as welcoming him to their consort to which are bidden spirits pleasing to the Gods--Plato, Pythagoras, and all the people of the Choir of Immortal Love, there where the blessed spirits have their birth-home and live in days filled full of 'joyous festival' and made happy by the Gods.

24. I have related Plotinus' life; something remains to tell of my revision and arrangement of his writings. This task he himself had imposed upon me during his lifetime and I had pledged myself to him and to the circle to carry it out.

I judged that in the case of treatises which, like these, had been issued without consideration of logical sequence it was best to disregard the time-order.

Apollodorus, the Athenian, edited in ten volumes the collected works of Epicharmus, the comedy writer; Andronicus, the Peripatetic, Classified the works ofAristotle and of Theoophrastus according to subject, bringing together the discussions of related topics: I have adopted a similar plan.

I had fifty-four treatises before me: I divided them into six sets of nine, an arrangement which pleased me by the happy combination of the perfect number six with the nines: to each such ennead I assigned matter of one general nature, leading off with the themes presenting the least difficulty.

THE FIRST ENNEAD, on this method, contains the treatises of a more ethical tendency:

1. On the Animate and the Man.
2. On the Virtues.
3. On Dialectic.
4. On Happiness.
5. Whether Happiness depends on Extension of Time.
6. On Beauty.
7. On the Primal Good and Secondary forms of Good.
8. On Evil.
9. On the Reasoned Withdrawal from Life.

THE SECOND ENNEAD, following the more strictly ethical First, is physical, containing the disquisitions on the world and all that belongs to the world:

1. On the World.
2. On the Circular Movement.
3. Whether the Stars have Causal Operation.
4. On the Two Orders of Matter.
5. On Potentiality and Actuality.

6. On Quality and Form.
7. On Coalescence.
8. Why Distant Objects appear Small.
9. Against those Declaring the Creator of the World, and the World itself, to be Evil.

THE THIRD ENNEAD, still keeping to the World, discusses the philosophical implications of some of its features:

1. On Fate.
2. The First Treatise on Providence.
3. The Second Treatise on Providence.
4. On Our Tutelary Spirit.
5. On Love.
6. On the Impassibility of the Bodiless.
7. On Eternity and Time.
8. On Nature, Contemplation, and The One.
9. Various Questions.

25. These first three Enneads constitute in my arrangement one self-contained section.

The treatise on Our Tutelary Spirit is placed in the Third Ennead because this Spirit is not discussed as it is in itself, and the essay by its main content falls into the class dealing with the origin of man. Similar reasons determined the inclusion in this set of the treatise on Love. That on Eternity and Time is placed in this Third Ennead in virtue of its treatment of Time: that on Nature, Contemplation, and The One, because of the discussion of Nature contained in it.

FOURTH ENNEAD containing the treatises dealing with the Soul:

1. On the Essence of the Soul (I)
2. On the Essence of the Soul (II)
3. Questions referring to the Soul (I)
4. Questions referring to the Soul (II)
5. Questions referring to the Soul (III)
6. On Sensation and Memory.
7. On the Immortality of the Soul.
8. On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies.
9. Whether all Souls are One.

THE FIFTH ENNEAD--following upon that dealing with the Soul--contains the treatises upon the Intellectual-Principle, each of which had also some reference to the All-Transcending and to the Intellectual-Principle in the Soul, and to the Ideas:

1. On the three Primal Hypostases.
2. On the Origin and Order of the Post-Primals.
3. On the Conscious Hypostases and the All-Transcending.
4. How the Post-Primal derives from the Primal, and on the One.
5. That the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellectual-Principle, and on the Good.
6. That there is no Intellectual Act in the Principle which transcends the Authentic-Existent; and on the Nature that has the Intellectual Act Primally and that which has it Secondarily.
7. Whether there are Ideas even of Particulars.
8. On Intellectual Beauty.
9. On the Intellectual-Principle, on the Ideas, and on the Authentic-Existent.

26. These Fourth and Fifth Enneads, again, I have arranged in the form of one distinct section.

The last Ennead, the Sixth, constitutes one other section, so that we have the entire work of Plotinus in three sections, the first containing three Enneads, the second two, the third one Ennead.

SIXTH ENNEAD, is as follows:

1,2,3. On the Kinds of Being.
4,5. That the Authentic-Existent, on and identical, is everywhere present, integrally.
6. On Numbers.
7. How the Multitude of Ideas Exists; and on the Good
8. On Free-Will and the Will of the One.
9. On the Good, or The One.

Thus, in sum, I have arranged the fifty-four treatises, constituting Plotinus' entire work, into six sets of nine: to some of the treatises I have further added commentaries--irregularly, as friends asked for enlightenment on this or that point; finally for all the treatises, except that on Beauty, which was not to hand, I have written Summaries which follow the chronological order: in this department of my work besides the Summaries will be found Developments; the numbering of these also adopts the chronological order.

Now I have only to go once more through the entire work, see to the punctuation, and correct any verbal errors; what else has solicited my attention, the reader will discover for himself.